



## Pick Your Path to Health

### **Empower Your Mind, Body, and Spirit by Taking a Class**

Too often, women shortchange their own time and needs for those of other family members or friends. It can be difficult to carve out space for yourself when the demands for your attention are so great. However, national studies and thousands of personal testimonials show that the benefits of taking time for yourself far outweigh the setbacks of an hour or two away from those demands. Signing up for a class is one way that women are staking claim on their lives and taking steps to expand their knowledge, grow an interest, and learn new skills...for themselves. Women are learning that it's never too late to continue their education.

"Education engages the mind," says Connie Cordovilla, Assistant Director, Human Rights and Community Relations, at the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. "It empowers women to think about themselves in a positive light."

Taking a class is a simple, quick, and empowering first step you can take to improve your physical or mental health. It's energizing to refresh skills, update knowledge about a topic with recent information, or learn something brand new. And as the saying goes, "energy begets energy."

For those looking to advance their careers, continuing education is a great option. "Continuing education keeps you abreast of the issues in your chosen field, and it also helps keep your mind sharp so that you can improve your work and move towards a promotion," says Cordovilla. "This kind of education gives you flexibility in the job market."

"There are also those classes that we do for stress relief, like ceramics or painting, and those that help us learn a craft, like doing taxes or putting together a will," Cordovilla says. "No education is ever wasted. It always goes to some use whether personal or professional gain."

Whether you want to learn how to cook low-fat recipes, develop a winning attitude, practice yoga, lower stress, or improve your finances, there is probably a group or an organization that offers courses, workshops, or seminars on the subject. The opportunities are endless. Enrolling in a class also presents you with an opportunity to meet new people who share similar interests.

How do you find classes suitable and convenient for you? Check with any of the following organizations:

- Continuing education departments in colleges and universities
- Hospitals, clinics, and health centers
- Women's organizations, such as the YWCA
- Workplaces
- Churches and religious organizations
- City, county, or state health and recreation departments
- Libraries

Getting out and taking a class has another benefit as well. It gets your body moving, and we can all use a little more exercise in our lives. Do yourself a favor-take a couple hours for yourself this week. Register for a class. Pick something that interests you. The world is your classroom!

*Pick Your Path to Health is a national public health campaign sponsored by the Office on Women's Health within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For other tips on improving your health, or for more information on the Pick Your Path to Health campaign, call 1-800-994-WOMAN or visit the National Women's Health Information Center at <http://www.4woman.gov>.*